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THE
Previous Question
IN
POLITICS.

HONESTY is the BEST POLICY.



L O N D O N :

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T H E

Previous Question

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P O L I T I C S.



THE Dignity of this *Subject*, and the Difficulty of supporting it I confess, inspire me with Awe ; and when I consider what *superior Talent* have already lent their Aid in this *Sacred Cause* ; the *Attention*, the *Influence*, the *uniform Conviction* they have produced amongst all Ranks of Men, who are not in the *Bondage of Corruption*, I have no Excuse left for this

Attempt, but the Gratification of what I esteem to be a noble Passion, the fond Desire of being number'd with the *Great* and *Good* ; this, therefore, joined to the best Intention that ever fill'd my Heart, is the *Principle* upon which I take up my Pen, and will be my *Sanctuary* when I shall lay it down.

I am not insensible, that so coarse a Motto cannot bespeak the Attention either of a *Modern Genius* in Politics, or one of a *Courtly Education* ; the former is too refined in *Sentiment*, the latter in *Breeding*, to pay the least Regard to any Observations, that can possibly fall within the Limits of a Principle, so long under *Disgrace* : But the Plainness of it will at once excuse, at least account for my Neglect of all Fashions ; especially those which are introduced to countenance a profligate Disregard to the Principles of Liberty ; and finally to resolve all *Public Virtue*, or *Love of Country*, into *Self-Interest*, *Ambition*, *Revenge*, or the mere Affectation of Popularity. The homely *Apophorism* which I have prefixed, whilst interpreted with Regard to private Life, is admitted to be unexceptionable, to be the Foundation of all mutual *Confidence* and *Commerce* among Men : But by a strange *Revolution* of human Affairs ; by the Refinement of our Manners ; by a yet nicer Refinement in the Arts of Government, and the superior Skill that is requir'd to conduct so complicated a Machine, this *Motto* it seems is reversed ; and *Honesty* is of so little Use in the great *Arcana* of *State*, that the farther a Man is removed from its Influence, the nearer he approaches to *Political Wisdom* ; and is proportionably *Wise* and *Good* in his *Publick Capacity*,

as he renounces what constitutes this Character in his private : So that a *Consummate Statesman* may say with his *Sovereign Archetype*, from henceforth Evil be thou my Good.

THE Horror with which this Doctrine struck me, *both drawn me forth*, as the Order of Men called Quakers express themselves, in the everlasting Power of *common Honesty* and *common Sense* to encounter it : In this Undertaking I shall certainly use all the Freedom, and all the Strength that can safely be exercised by one, whose Purpose it is to tear from the Root this *Doctrine* ; which not only renders useless the Distinctions between *Virtue* and *Vice*, but inverts the whole Order of Nature ; and would prove the *Blessings* of Heaven to be the greatest *Curses* upon Earth.

AS the Points which will naturally arise in treating this Question, are fundamental, and *previous* to all others of a political Kind, it would be unpardonable to treat them lightly, or without Method ; I will therefore examine them under the Three following Divisions ; into which they may be very naturally thrown.

I. BY what *Arts* this Distinction, between *Private* and *Publick* Virtue, first arose, and gained Footing in the World ; upon what Foundation our *Great Ancestors* withstood the ruinous Evils that necessarily flow from this mischievous Source ; by what Means these Evils may *break* in upon our Posterity, and *sink* the Constitution.

II. How

II. HOW *slavish* the Principles are, which are founded upon this Distinction ; and how *oppressive* the Inferences that immediately follow from them ; and whether They who are actuated by the *former*, must not unavoidably be drawn into the *latter*.

III. THAT if in Consequence of this, our *Posterity* should be so unhappy as to be oppress'd with a *Dependent Corrupt Parliament*, *Corruption* will be diffus'd amongst the Mass of the People ; and consequently, if this *Dependency* should not be removed, *Their Liberties* must be *lost*.

THE First Question carries us to the Origin of Government ; upon which a few short Remarks are necessary.

THERE is no Proposition in *Euclide* more capable of Demonstration than the following ; That *They* to whom Mankind originally delegated the Power, that was necessary to *preserve Them*, have generally aim'd at rendering it *arbitrary*, and therefore sufficient to *destroy Them* : The Conclusion from this, is as short as it is plain ; that the *Means* which were esteem'd most effectual to compass this *End*, were studiously *improved* ; and the fairest Occasions of exerting them carefully *sought* : The *Sphere* therefore, in which *Princes* were to *move*, being above the ordinary Level, the *Principles* upon which They were to *act*, with a little *Cunning* and much *Iniquity* were easily render'd *inconceivable* ; and consequently, as these *Principles* were not the *Subject*
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of vulgar *Enquiry*, they soon became the *Object* of common *Belief*.

THE *Access* of *Princes* to the Fruits of the Peoples Labour, being easy in Proportion to these superior Means of Imposition, all the Arts of *Treachery* and *Fraud* had ample Scope. They proceeded accordingly; and as *Religion* is inseparable from Community, they founded it upon the grossest Superstition; and taught *profligate Teachers* to direct it, to the Subversion of those very *Principles* upon which Community was founded.

THE People therefore were taught to believe, That the Distinctions between *Virtue* and *Vice*, did not arise from the Nature of Things, but merely from the Custom of Countries; That *Laws* were the only Measure of *Right* and *Wrong*; and that *They*, who were intrusted with the Power of making them, were therefore the *Oracles* of Truth, the Fountain of Justice, and *could do no Wrong*. The *Authority* of the *Church*, being thus prostituted to advance *Delusions* of the State, they naturally became *received Truths*, and consequently a solid Foundation of *Error*.

FROM Doctrines so derived and inculcated, implicit Obedience naturally followed; *Fear*, as such, and not the *Use* of it, because the *Object* of Reverence, and *Regions of State*, equally *unknown* to the People, were those upon which *Non-Resistance* was grounded: and thus, whilst the *biggest* Sentiments of Liberty, ought to have been the Measure of all *Government*, Advantage hath generally been taken of the Peoples Credulity, and the *worst* Kinds of *Populry* and *Immorality* have been

been taught as the only Principles upon which it could be *administred*: The destructive Consequences of which are, that all the Countries in the World, some few excepted, have been reduced to *lineal Slavery*; and Mens *formal* Departure from many of those *Rights*, which *could not* be enjoyed with Security in a State of Nature, in Exchange for such as *ought* to be enjoyed in Society, hath only effectually deprived them of the Whole, by insuperable *Bondage*.

THAT *Englishmen* have not yet felt the *heaviest Effects* of these *perfidious Arts* will be admitted, though not so readily; that they approach them, and that the *Virtue* and *Unanimity* of the People, can alone rescue their Country from the *Desolation* that is inseperable from the *Practice* of them, will be most readily admitted, perhaps, proved; which will be no exceeding difficult Task, when it is considered, that those *Principles*, upon which we have escaped it, are now esteem'd both *unfashionable* and *impracticable*.

IF we only touch upon the Conduct of our *Ancestors*, it will substantially pave the Way to that which immediatly concern us. The People of this Island, were Originally too wise and brave to exchange a State of *Natural Liberty*, for that of *Social Slavery*; and have demonstrated through all their various Struggles, not only by Arguments but irresistible Force, that they understood the Principles upon which their Liberties were established; and held the Terms of their *Original Contract* to be *reciprocal*; that *Submission* to any *Authority* upon Earth, would be *Political Idolatry*, if it was not made an *Offering* to *Protection*; and there-

therefore that the *one* ought not to be *paid*, when the *other* was *with-held*.

AS the *Plan* of our Constitution was form'd, upon the first Principles of *Liberty* and *Virtue*, the *Foundation* of it must needs have been deeply laid; the *Shocks* therefore which the *Pile* received in *tempestuous Times*, served only to settle and fix it to the *Base*: The *Truth* and *Simplicity* of this Noble *Structure*, were equal'd by nothing but the *Manners* of the People, who *labour'd* to erect and *watch'd* to defend it. Whilst they preserved the Connection between the Principles of *Virtue* and *Virtue itself*; whilst the *one* taught them to *know* what the *other* amply rewarded them for *doing*, they justly concluded, that their Liberties would last as long as the *Constitution*; and the *Constitution* till the End of the World. But, if we should live to see a more *fashionable Age*, in which this *rough Simplicity* of our *Virtuous Ancestors*, should be attributed to the *Barbarity* of their *Customs*; and esteem'd rather a *Blemish* upon our *Descent*, than a *Pattern* for our *Conduct*: If by superior Delicacy those robust Principles of Government, that have so long upheld the vital Parts of our *Constitution*, should be thought absolutely impracticable; if the *Office* of *One*, nay, the *Leading Part* of the *Society*, should ever be prostituted in the *Device* and *Defence* of *WAYS* and *MEANS*, that naturally tend to secure the Ruin of the other; if the *Forms* of the *Constitution* only, should be observed, whilst the *Essentials* of it are either *wickedly* eluded, *formally* neglected, or *secretly* destroyed; if under this faint Appearance, calculated merely to attract vulgar Attention, sufficient Strength should be

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gain'd to wreat from the People, what *Corruption* alone cannot *accomplish*, nor *Power subdue* without this infamous Aid, then will the *Measures* of the *Government* be turn'd against the *Strength* of the *Constitution* ; which can only fall by the foulest Abuse of those Principles, that so greatly contributed to its *Rise* ; then will *Oppression* be converted into *Law*, and *Law* into the Peoples *Ruin* ; then will the *English* sink into the common Mass of Slaves ; then will the *Distinction*, so long maintained by them only, between *Free* and *Bondsmen*, be at an End, and lost in uniform universal *Slavery*.

BY a few I know these may be called *unnatural Surmises* ; by fewer yet, *false* ; by one Man *infamous* ; by the Bulk of the People, for whose Sake alone they are convey'd to them, *Honest, Just Sentiments* : To shew that they are neither *unnatural*, nor *false*, nor *infamous*, I need only under the Second Head, shortly state *those* that undeniably are so, and yet are esteemed both *Wise* and *Honest* ; at least taught as *Useful Practicable Sentiments*. By laying down therefore under the Second Head these Principles of *Policy*, and descending freely into the Inferences that naturally follow from them, I shall certainly confirm the Consequences, already hypothetically deduced from the Second Head ; and prove that they are dangerous, and ought to be guarded against although *remote*.

2dly. HOW *slavish* the *Principles* are, which are founded upon this *Distinction*, and how *oppressive* the *Inferences* that immediately follow from them ; and whether *They* who are actuated by

by the *former*, must not unavoidably be drawn into the *latter*.

IF the following *Articles* of Modern *Political Faith*, are not actually *imposed* by *Authority*, yet that they are taught and defended from the highest down to the lowest *Dealer* in Corruption, is notorious.

1st *Article*. THAT the *Principles* upon which the *Conduct* and *Welfare* of a State depend, are essentially different from the *Principles* which ought to actuate Men in private Life.

2^d. THAT the *Bulk* of the *People*, are no *Judges* of *Public Affairs*, or the *Interest* of their *Country*; and consequently, that the *Sense* of a *Nation*, in Opposition to that of a *Minister*, is no Proof that his Measures are either *weak* or *dangerous*; or that He himself, is *ignorant* or *corrupt*.

3^d. THAT the *Freedom* and *Prosperity* of the *People*, are effectually secured by the *Dependency* of their *Representatives* upon the *Crown*.

THE Scope of these Principles hath indeed been often shewn, but the particular Points arising from them, have rather been contended for, and opposed in the *General*, than drawn out at full Length: I will therefore treat this Scheme of *Folly* and *Corruption* Systematically; and lay before the Publick, the *Political Corollaries* that directly follow from it.

1st. FROM the First Article it follows, That *Falshood*, *Treachery*, and *Fraud*, dextrously managed,

naged, answer the same Ends in the State, that *Truth, Sincerity, and Honesty*, do in the *World*; and consequently, that these *primary* Qualities of the *Ministerial Office*, thus prudently exerted, as unavoidably tend to aggrandize the State, by increasing the *Wealth*, and raising the *Credit* of it, as the *latter* will to establish the Reputation and advance the Fortune of *Men* in private Life.

2d. AS the Constitution of the Government, will thus be *secured* or *endanger'd*, by the *Prevalence* or *Depression* of these *private Vices*, but *publick Virtues*, so the *Compass* in which they can be exerted is of equal Moment; and therefore the *more* extensive the *Power* is, that is delegated to *Him* who is in the *Administration*, the *more* effectually will the *Constitution* be preserved.

3d. THE Continuance of Power naturally tending to the Increase of it, the *longer* the *Prime Engineer* of any *Government*, has been employ'd to work this *Machine*, the stronger is the Reason for continuing him in Power; because the *greater* will be his *Influence* upon the *Conduct* of such, whose *private* Judgment might suggest, what they ought not to regard in their *publick* Capacity.

4th. AND as *He* cannot stand alone, so the nearer they resemble him, who act, or to speak more metaphysically, are *acted upon*, in Concert with him, the more able is he to support himself, and by Consequence the State.

5th. THESE very singular Arts of *political Wisdom* being more *easily* known, than *safely* practised, so the Welfare of a State that is founded upon them,

them, must absolutely depend upon the *Number* of the Persons employ'd in its Service ; and consequently a *Majority* of Men firmly perswaded of these *Truths* and steady in Pursuit of them, are absolutely necessary to its Security.

6th. THE *Morals* therefore, which would render a *private* Man the worst Creature who receives Protection from Society, nay the *Evil Genius* of it, would qualify him for the best *Statesman* ; and consequently, that the same Measure by which the *Crimes* of the People are tried and suitable *Punishments* inflicted, the *Virtues* of a *Minister* are to be known and rewarded.

FROM the Second Article the following Corollaries are immediately deducible.

1st. THE more opposite to *private* Judgment *publick* Affairs are conducted, the more justly ; and consequently, the more *apparent* Reason there is to *dread* the Danger, or *prevent* the Loss of the Peoples *Liberties* or *Properties*, the less *real* Reason is there for their Fear or Care ; and of Course the greater is the Security of both.

2d. AS the *Complaints* of a People are always proportioned to their *Ignorance* of the *Publick Interest*, so will the *Neglect* of them be to the *Knowledge* of it ; the *less* *Regard* therefore, that is paid to the *Sense* of the *Nation*, the more the true Interest and immediate Welfare of it are duly considered, and consequently the *louder* the People complain, the less Right have *They* to be heard or redress'd.

3d. AS

3d. AS by the last Corollary from the First Article it follows, that what constitutes *Private Vice*, is the Effence of *Publick Virtue*, so from the last of these it follows, that *private Folly* must needs be the *Effence* of *publick Wisdom*.

FROM the Third Article proceed the following Corollaries.

1st. THAT *Corruption* is that *superior Spring* upon which all *inferior Movements* in the *State* depend ; and therefore what *strengthens* the one, must needs be proportionably conducive to the *Regularity* of the other.

2d. THAT the *Independency* of the *Representative* Body upon the *Collective*, and the *Dependency* of it upon the *Crown*, being equally necessary to preserve the Constitution and the Liberties of the People, the *former* therefore is under an Obligation to *disregard* both the *Sense* and *Instructions* of their *Constituents*.

3d. AS *private Judgment* is by these Means render'd uselefs, the *less* the Representative Body is influenced by it, the *more* they contribute to the *Publick Good*.

4th THE greater the Advantage is, to each Member arising from his *Dependency*, the stronger will be his *Inducement* to preserve that Government from whence he derives it ; and the more they are under the *Influence* of the *Crown*, the less Difficulty will the *Crown* have to protect its *Subjects*.

5th.

5th. LASTLY, The more of the Peoples *Wealth* by these Means, *runs into the Treasury*, the more forcibly will it *flow* upon them, and return into their Hands, when the *Gates* of it are *seasonably open'd*.

THESE Divisions might have been carried much further, without Repetition ; but they would *dwindle*, and become almost imperceptible to those who are so happy, as to be wholly unacquainted with the Doctrine from whence they are derived.

IT must be admitted that these Principles of *Policy*, and the *Corollaries* deducible from them, are not *peculiar* to the *present Times* ; some of them have been adopted by former *Great Men*, under the Weight of whose *Administration* the Nation hath *groan'd* ; but an *adequate* Knowledge, a minute and distinct Application of all the Parts or them, are *Excellencies* which but *one Politician* in the World hath yet arrived at ; for his enterprising Genius it was reserved, to *practice*, what had only been the *dark* imperfect *Theory* of his Great Predecessors.

BUT to prevent as well as obviate, any Objections that may be made to my Candour in the State of this most extraordinary *System* of Government ; I will trace it further yet, and by an *Induction* of *approved Particulars*, shew the Connection and Uniformity of the Whole ; with what Spirit it has been enter'd into and display'd ; how clearly its Inferences flow from and mutually support each other ; and how strictly they unite to accomplish the Grandest Design !

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AS the several *Positions* to which I shall have Recourie upon this Occasion, are not less *recent* than *notorious*, the bare Enumeration of them will fully prove, that I am not contending against *Phantoms* of my own; but against a real Scheme of Government. Brought to *Maturity* by long *Experience*, and a steady Course of Actions: These *Positions* may be ranged in the following Order;

That formidable standing *Armies*, in *Times* of Peace, quarter'd in the *Bowels* of a *Country* of *Liberty*, and cut off from the Benefit of their *Laws*, are absolutely necessary to *preserve* the *Constitution*, the *Laws*, and the *Freedom* of the *People*. That a *Removal* of those *Officers* out of the Army, whose experienced Worth had gained them the Affections of the *People*; merely on Account of their *civil Dissention* from a favourite Court Point, was made with no other View, than to secure the *salutary Ends* to which the Army is subservient. That *fruitless Naval Expeditions*, destructive of the *Wealth* and *Strength* of the *Nation*; in which the *Lives* of some *Great*, and many *Thousands* of *Brave Men*, fell a Sacrifice to the *Inclemencies* and *tormenting Heat* of a deadly Climate; was a deep Measure, and wisely undertook to gain every Advantage propos'd. That *tame Submissions* to repeated *Injults* and *Plunders*, render'd yet more insupportable, by a ridiculous Method of *obtaining Satisfaction* for them, were calculated solely to *reclaim* the *Offenders*; *invite* them to future Commerce, and have actually *raised* rather than *sunk* our *National Credit*. That a Train of *injudicious unprofitable Treaties*, patched up through *Dread* of the Publick on one Side, and consummate *Ignorance* of their

their real Interest on the other, are necessary to preserve the *Balance of Power* in *Europe* ; and consequently, that the *Quarrels* of every other Prince, ought to be more immediately the Object of our Concern than of his. That an *Extension* of *Excise Laws*, and a vast Increase of *Officers*, with the infinite *Embargoes*, which they unavoidably lay upon *Trade*, would immediately tend to the Benefit of the fair Traders, and lessen the *Burthen* of *Taxes* already imposed upon them. That every Attempt to *baffle Corruption*, and to remove the pernicious *Influence* it has on the Minds of the People, *weakens* the Hands of the Crown, *distresses* the Government, and immediately tends to the Introduction of the *Pretender*. That *Places*, *Gifts*, and *Pensions*, from one Part of the Legislature to the *others*, are so far from disqualifying those who receive them for the Service of their Country, that by the *Mediation* of these *Influences*, our *Constitution* is preserved in its full Vigour. That the *corrupt Dependency* of all the Parts of the Legislature upon each other, constitutes the *uncorrupt Independency* of the Whole. That the frequent *Return* of that *Power* with which the *Representative* Body is invested, into the Hands of the *Collective*, so necessary to preserve the Spirit of *Liberty*, tends only to make the People *tumultuous*, to *endanger* the *Peace* of the *State*, and to ruin the *Cause of Liberty* under Pretence of abetting it. That the Support of *Publick Independent Companies*, which exclude their Fellow Subjects from the *Free Exercise* of *Trade*, greatly *enlarges* the *Bounds* of *Trade*. That *Enquiries* into the *Blackest Frauds* of those *Companies*, by which the *Wealth* of the Nation may be *drained*, and the destroying *Projects* of any *Prime Minister* supported, greatly injures *Publick Credit*, and are therefore unfit to

be countenanced. That *Love of Country* is a false Passion, and always *finds* or *leaves* Men in a dis-temper'd Habit of Mind, and therefore disqualifies them for any Office in the State.

THE *Affinity* between many of these *Particulars*, and the Inferences which they are brought to confirm, may possibly be made an Objection to them ; but those who make it, will be convinced of their Error when they reflect, that the nearer the *Resemblance* is between these *Positions*, which have received the *Sanction* of *Authority*, and those which may be objected against, as the Effects of *Phantom* and *Falshood*, the juster is the Application and *closer* is the Purpose of them, to our present Question.

BUT as the *First* and *Second Articles* of the System of Political Faith, from whence the several Corollaries are deduced, can be taught with no other View than to enforce and establish the *Third*, and consequently, are to be considered merely as *Means* to a certain *End* ; the Discovery therefore of this *End*, the Purpose at which it *drives*, the *Consequences* that would attend the Accomplishments of it, and the Reasons upon which these *Consequences* are to be *endured* or *avoided* by a *Free People*, are Points of such Moment, that they demand our utmost Attention ; and will naturally gain it, if the *Third Article* be adequately examined.

THE *total Abolition* of that *Dependency* which is here inculcated, must be our *perpetual Theme* ; and although I shall admit, that it is far from being an inexhaustable *Fund* of *Argument*, yet every Man *feels* it to be *ore* of *Complaint* : To decline therefore any further *Search* into the *Nature*
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and Cure of so deadly a *Wound*, merely because it has been already *probed* by *wise* and *experienced Hands*, would give Strength to the *Beil*; which, as it works in the *Heart* of the *Constitution*, and might *secretly* destroy it, ought to be *laid open*: And as every Attempt to prevent this, must be calculated to render the *Disease mortal*, it becomes our Concern to encounter such cruel Designs, with a *continued, steady, vigorous, and loud Opposition*.

THE-*E* therefore are the *Motives*, and I hope will prove the *Excuses*, for what I shall further observe upon the Third Article, and the short *Digression* I am obliged to make as an Introduction to it.

IT is *notorious*, and therefore I mention it, that the *divine Right* and *unlimited Prerogative* of *Kings*, once found *Advocates* in this *Country*; and so astonishing was the Infatuation of Mankind, that *Cer- tists* concerning this *subduing Nonsense*, gained and held their Attention for half a Century.

AUTHORITY, had usurp'd the Province of *Reason*; and *sacrilegious Bigots* drunk with *Enthusiasm*, bent upon the Subversion of common Sense, imposed such *Doctrines* upon the People, as the last *Efforts* of *Religious Phrenzy*, and *State Iniquity* united, had never before equal'd: And thus Opinions, which struck at the Root of Liberty, were in Fact *believed*, though not *practised*, amongst the wisest and freest People upon Earth; and if the Success attending these *devout Impieties*, had answer'd the Intention of those who imposed them, our *Liberties* had been lost in the same *Gulf*, that hath already swallow'd the Liberties of the whole

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World: The *Bulk* of the People, would then in good *Earnest*, have been divided, whether their *Right to Life* and the *Blessings* that attended a virtuous Course of it, was *derived from God who made them*, or *Kings whom they had made*.

BUT *common Sense* revived, and hath happily *outlived* this Species of Error; which has long been exploded: We are now to encounter the *Doctrine* that has been substituted in the Room of it; which is equally *absurd* in its *Nature*; but infinitely more *dangerous* in its *Consequence*.

THIS new *Expedient*, of *Governing* a Free People by *Corruption* and *Dependency*, is at Length brought into so great Repute, that a late Writer in Defence of it, without the least Remorse frankly owns, *That it is no less than a Contradiction to suppose, that the Consideration of Publick Good* (including their own private Share in that Good) *should be a Medium to induce a House of Commons to cooperate with the Crown*.

THE infamous *Paper*, * in which this Position is as *clearly* laid down, as it is *obscurely* and immorally vindicated, I should have found some Difficulty to mention, if it was not a most undoubted Truth, that *They* who have been *First* in the *State*, have not blush'd to employ Creatures who are of the last Rank in the World: The *lowest Writer* therefore under this Circumstance is not the least significant, since it is his Province generally to palliate, the most *execrable* Part of his *Master's Conduct*.

* Daily Courant.

AND as the *Issue* to which this Writer fairly brings the *Question*, is not only free from *Disguise*, but is that alone upon which the *corrupt Dependency of Parliament*, can with the least *Consistency* be defended, I will take up the *Argument* here.

THE immediate and unconstrain'd *Inference* from this Position is, that *virtuous Motives* cannot influence the *Conduct* of the *Peoples Representatives* in Parliament; since they can only arise from that *Consideration*, which, by the Terms of the Proposition, is supposed to be a *Contradiction*. If therefore the *Influence* of *virtuous Motives* be removed, *Corruption* must be the *Medium*, which can induce a *House of Commons* to cooperate with the *Crown*; and consequently, the *Interest* of the *Crown*, and not of the *Publick*, will be the *Tendency* of their *Conduct*.

IF the *Tendency* of their *Conduct*, be the *Interest* of the *Crown*, it must be in *Opposition* to that of the *People*, and therefore as the *one* is advanced, the *other* in Proportion must be depressed: Since they must either be corrupted to do their *Duty*, or *betray* their *Trust*; but as the *former* of these is *unnatural*, it is reasonable to conclude, that the *latter* is *true*.

TO deny these Consequences, or elude them, by saying they can't be *dangerous*, because the *Crown* can have no distinct *Interest* from that of the *People*; and because their *Representatives*, can have no Equivalent for *betraying* this sacred *Trust*, will appear to be equally ridiculous from what follows.

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IF by distinct, indeed is meant, that *real Interest*, that *substantial Happiness* and *Gloxy*, which will be inseparable from every *Prince*, whose *Government* is founded in *Virtue*, and *administer'd without Corruption*; who knows the *Use* and *Extent* of his *Kingly Office*, and sustains the *Dignity* of it, whilst he *supports* that of his *People*; who only esteems himself to be what he really is, the *Guardian*, the *Trustee* of their *Liberties*, it will be at once admitted, that such a *Prince* can have no *Motive* either to *disfranchise* or *enslave* his *Subjects*; and consequently, can have no *Interest* that is *distinct* from *theirs*: But, if it should be our mournful Fate hereafter, to see a *Prince* upon the *Throne* destitute of these *illustrious Qualities*, and yet claim infinitely greater Submission than is even due to *them*; whose *little Soul*, *tyrannical Ambition*, and *ferdid Avarice*, should entice *Him* to reverse, or disable *Him* to pursue this *Conduct*; should determine his *Choice* and confirm his *Opinion* of a *Minister*, wholly disengaged from *Principle*, devoted to *Corruption*, and acquainted only with those *Expedients*, upon which alone a *weak* or an *arbitrary* Government can be supported: If these Circumstances should ever *coexist*, and it involves no Contradiction to suppose, that the *People* may in Times to come, be reduced to hold their *Liberties* by so *precarious a Tenure*, it must then be admitted, that the *Interest* of the *Crown* and the *Interest* of the *People*, would not only be *distinct*, but subsist upon *distinct Principles*; it would then be *false* as well as *infamous* to say, that the *Crown* had no *distinct Interest* from that of the *People*.

T H E R E would not have been the least Occasion for these Suppositions, if the *Question* was,

was, what the *real Interest* of a *wise and virtuous Prince*, and consequently of his *present Majesty* actually is; or what *he may* esteem to be such, in Opposition to what an *ignorant and a vicious Prince* will *certainly* esteem to be his *real Interest*; But the Grand Question is, and my Purpose directs me to that, what Foundation we have to believe, that every *Prince* will *certainly* think he is pursuing his own *Interest*, when he is *promoting* that of his *Subjects*; and how far his *Professions* may be relied upon, in an Instance, in which if he gains Credit, they *may* be *ruin'd*, and if *he* does not, *they must* be *saved*. These Considerations, which are natural, leave no Room for *implicit Belief*: I hope it would require more *Fraud* and more *Power*, than any Man in this Age can boast, to impose so impious an *Absurdity* upon a *Free People*, as it would be to say, that the Principles of their Liberty, are the Subject of Reason, and yet the *Means* of securing it to their Posterity the *Object* of *Faith*: *Evidence* therefore only, will guide *rational Men*, in a Point of so prodigious Concern. The shortest and securest Way to be furnished with this, would be to examine the State of the *political World* at present; if that be insufficient, to consult the *Histories* of what hath past in it since Government hath been instituted. If Enquiries of this Kind, were to determine how far *unlimited Confidence* in any *Prince*, would be subservient to a *Peoples Happiness* or *Misery*; it from hence, *Rules* should be *formed* and apply'd without Reserve, to the present Question, it would be as easy to establish an unerring *Measure*, as it will be impossible for any *People* to preserve their *Liberties*, without a strict Observance of it: But, which is extremely hard, for this very Reason, it will be as difficult to draw the *proper Conclusion* with *Decency*, as to
bear

bear it with *Temper*. Let it therefore for the Sake of *Princes*, only be *understood* ; but yet so understood, as to make a most *Substantial* Part of this Argument.

THESE *Remarks* will yet receive further Illustration, and be render'd more conducive to the End for which they were made, by considering the Subject in the *opposite Light* ; and shewing that a *Dependent Corrupt Parliament*, is not less compatible with the Interest of a *virtuous Prince*, than it is *dangerous* to the *People*, under the *Direction* of a *vicious Prince*. Upon the same Principle that so despicable a Paper as the *Courant* hath been taken Notice of, I shall take the Liberty to make a few Remarks upon a Maxim which is reiterated every Week, in a Paper equally despicable, and equally dedicated to the Advancement of *Corruption*, viz. *

THAT the Laws of the Land, are the standing Measure of the King's Government, and of the Peoples Obedience.

THIS is admitted to be a Happiness peculiar to the present Times ; I will therefore draw the *Inferences* which follow from it.

THE First Inference is, that the *Affections* of a *People* thus *equally Govern'd* are naturally placed upon their Sovereign ; who will always find his lasting *Security*, in the *Hearts* of *those* to whom he gives impartial *Protection* ; and consequently the Crown wants no Degree of *real Influence*, in

* London Journal.

either House of *Parliament*, distinct from that which arises from the *Constitution*, and its steady Regard to this *Principle*: To suppose that a Prince may constantly regard this, and yet fail to meet with that *Duty* and *Affection* which are necessary both to his *Ease* and *Security*, involves this Absurdity, that although *equal Protection*, is the chief *Blessing* that can attend a *Community*, and the Continuance of it the *Highest Virtue* of its *Sovereign*, yet *neither* of *these* are suitable *Motives* either of *Duty* or *Affection* in Return for them.

AS this *Absurdity* is too gross to receive an Answer, I will follow the *Conclusion* against which it is advanced: Either therefore, those *Dependencies* created in both Houses of *Parliament*, are entirely *useless*; or else the Inference in Point of Argument *though not of Fact*, would be, that the Laws of the Land are not the Standing Measure of the King's Government and the Peoples Obedience; since if they were, the *Crown* cannot for the Reasons already given, want the *Influence* arising from such *Dependencies*; if the *former* be true, it is ridiculous to create them; if the latter it is dangerous.

TO admit that these *Dependencies* may be *either useless or dangerous*, and yet to contend for the *Expediency* of them, would be a Contention for the Establishment of *expensive Folly*, or *oppressive Measures*; if the *one*, it is Banter, and therefore an *Insult* upon a *Free People*; if the *other*, it is a steady Design to enslave them, and consequently these *Dependencies* ought not to be created.

TO admit that they are *neither useless nor dangerous*, not only supposes *Corruption* to be the chief

Expedient of Government, but involves this Contradiction, that although the *Peoples Representatives* are admitted to be incapable of any *Influence*, which is not *corrupt*, yet that they will be too *virtuous* to betray or surrender those *Liberties*, which from *Virtue*, they have no Motive to defend, and consequently these *Dependencies* ought not to be created.

TO say therefore, that Men under so *corrupt* an *Influence*, can have no *Equivalent* for the Loss of their *Liberty*, whilst it is admitted that they can't be actuated by the *Principles* of it, nor the *Good* of their *Country*, including their own Share in that *Good*, is a flagrant Absurdity, if not a direct Contradiction; for it supposes *they* set a *Value* upon that, which by the Terms of the former Proposition, can't induce them to cooperate with the *Crown* for the *Good* of the *Publick*; and consequently *private Gain* to the *Peoples Representatives*, may not only be an *Equivalent* for the Loss of their own *Liberties*, but for betraying *those* of their *Country*.

TO say further, that the *Crown* hath long had a very great *Influence* in *Parliament*, and that to remove it, is to alter the *Constitution* and remove *Foundations*, is equally false and absurd; because, every Child knows, at what Point of Time, and from what *Causes* this *additional Weight* was thrown into the *Scale* of the *Crown*; and that the *Calamities* of our Country, created most of those *Dependencies*, which are now *impudently* and *ignorantly* said, to be not only the *Support* of the *Government* but a Part of the *Constitution*; and because, if any Power may have been lately *lodged* with the *Crown*, which is found by *Experience* to be inconsistent

sistent with the *Interest* of the People, the Inference from thence is not, the Continuance, but the Removal of it ; if this was not the Consequence, that which adds *Weight* to *Oppression*, would add *Strength* to the *Reasons* for continuing it: This Conclusion I confess would prove but little, against Those who have adopted the *Principles* against which it is levelled , and if an *Answer* to *Them* merely, had prompted me to enter upon this short *Enquiry*, I should certainly not have *objected* Consequences which *They* admit, as an Answer to the *Principles* *They* contend for, how satisfactory soever, this Method of Reasoning may be esteemed by those who very justly think, that the *oppressive Consequences* of any *Doctrine*, are of themselves a thorough Refutation of it. But my Design was deeper, it was not merely to *answer*, but suppress this *System* ; by exhibiting it to the World ; to shew even to Men of the most inferior Understandings, That if in any after Age these enormous *Doctrines* of Political Ruin should be reduced to Practice, and the *Authors* of them not be *banished* the Country, or effectually restrained from doing more signal Mischief whilst they are suffered to continue in it, the Government must either return to its *first Principles*, or the People be brought to *settled Slavery* ; which will be demonstrated under the Third Head.

3dly. THAT if in Consequence of this, our Posterity should be so unhappy as to be oppress'd with a *dependent corrupt Parliament*, *Corruption* must be *diffused* amongst the Mass of the People ; and consequently, if this *Dependency* should not be *removed* their *Liberties* must be *lost*.

TO write tolerably, and declaim well against *Corruption*, the *Friends* of it admit to be an easy Task ; but to stop either the *Continuance* or the *Growth* of it, they tell us is really an *insuperable Difficulty* : By the *former* Part of this deep Observation, I presume they mean to condemn the *Abilities* of those who oppose it ; and by the *latter*, to shew the Absurdity of employing them in vain, to reclaim the People from a *Vice* that is inseparable from their Nature : I shall only digress into one Remark upon this and then proceed ; That if *ordinary Talents* may appear to *Advantage* when employ'd in Opposition to this *Expedient*, it will certainly follow, that *meaner Talents* yet, are required to govern with it ; for as the *Proneness* of Mankind to be corrupted, removes the Difficulty of *corrupting* them, the *Value* of the *Bribe*, and not the *Skill* or *Address* with which it is administer'd will produce the Effect.

TO investigate this Head thoroughly, and preserve Perspicuity, it will be necessary to reduce it to these two Questions ;

1st. WHETHER the *corrupt Dependency* of such a *Parliament*, will proceed from the *Profligacy* and *Venality* of the *People* ; or this *Profligacy* and *Venality*, will devolve upon the *People* thro' the *corrupt Dependency* of such a *Parliament* ? If the latter,

2^{dly}. WHETHER such a *Parliament* will not only ruin the *Constitution* by their *Corruption*, but destroy the *Peoples Virtue*, to enjoy the Fruits of that *Corruption* with Impunity ?

THE Imputation of Tautology, will be of the *least* Moment, when Points of the *greatest*, are the Subject of Enquiry ; that which has been already said therefore, will be esteemed only *per se* *propter* it to the *End* in View, and not a Reason for declining the Pursuit of it.

THE First *Question* gives just Occasion to discuss a Point, which hath been constantly insisted upon, and constantly labour'd, *viz.*

THAT Luxury, and consequently Corruption, begin *with the People*.

THIS *Affertion* upon many late Occasions, and in the most *August Assemblies* of Men, hath been maintained with all imaginable *Art* ; and with so great Success, as to unite a *Majority* of them, against an *ineffectual Design*, to remove that pernicious *Influence*, which hath so long been the Subject of just Complaint ; let us therefore examine this *Doctrine* carefully ; not that it *deserves* our Notice, but because it hath *found* the *greatest Advocates*, and seduced the *best* ; whose *Theories of Corruption*, have been dispersed throughout the Kingdom, as very *correct Systems of Government*, especially for a *Country of Liberty*.

I might quote a Thousand approved *Authorities* to shew, that *Luxury*, and consequently *Corruption*, never *began* with the *People* ; that they have only *followed*, never *set* the Example ; but I proposed to Reason throughout, and therefore will have Recourse to no Authority.

AS the real *Strength* of any Country may be truly said to consist in the *Wealth*, so the *Security* immediately depends upon the *Strength* of it; and consequently the *Security* will *decrease* proportionably, as the *Wealth* of it is *exhausted*; that *Luxury* is not only the Bane of that *Kind* of *Industry*, which is one great Source of *Wealth*, but is also a Means of exhausting it, will hardly be disputed; what *Luxury* therefore really is, from whence it arises and receives *Nourishment*, are material Questions; the Reasoning upon which, will properly center in the main *Conclusion*.

AN unexceptionable *Definition* of *Luxury*, is more difficult than necessary; I will therefore give what I esteem to be a *plain*, rather than a *correct* one.

NATIONAL Luxury, consists in that *Degree*, or that *Kind* of *Expense*, which is diffused through all Ranks of Men in any Country; and upon the Whole, is inconsistent with the *Lasting Security* of the *State*.

THE *Luxury* of any *private* Person, as distinguished from *Luxury* in general, which is not an improper Distinction, consists in that *Kind* of *Expense*, which is either *above* the *Rank* he holds in the Nation; or which naturally tends to reduce him *below* it, by impairing his Circumstances, or ruining his *Fortune*.

THAT the *Luxury* of the *latter*, often arises from that of the *former*, and therefore is not immediately derived from those who rule the *State*, will be admitted; But that the *Luxury* of the *former*,

mer, is always immediately derived from those who Rule the *State*, may be shewn thus. It is a Self-evident Truth, that no *Fashion* can prevail in any Country, which is not either immediately introduced, or greatly countenanced, by the Government.

IN the *same Degree* therefore, that any *Fashion* is patronized by a Government will it be followed, and consequently the *Expence* of it increased by the Bulk of the *People*; who, in their Turn, will become as sure a Pattern for an extraordinary *Expence* of the *few*, as that of the *State* was for the common *Expence* of the *many*; since the Affectation of high Appearance and superior Condition, will as certainly possess a *few*, to excel the *Rest* who are in the same Class, as the Authority and Example of Rulers will inspire a whole *People*. If therefore *Luxury* according to the above Definitions, should ever run through the Body of the *People*, and become epidemic; it must arise from the Excess of some *Fashion*, and consequently, the Excess of *Expence* which attends that *Fashion*; but the *First* would be impossible, and the *Second* avoided, if those who give the *Fashion* Birth, did not give it *Nourishment* and *Vigour*, and did not either form the Design of extending, or most heartily concur in the Extension of it.

THE Cause that produces any Effect, is generally able to destroy it; but this is particularly true in the present Instance, because the Creation and the Annihilation of it depends upon one and the same Principle; and if nothing short of Destruction will prevent the Evil, the *Fashion* being intirely removed, which is intirely in the Power of the Government, the *Expence* and consequently the *Luxury* of it cease, upon the same Principle that they commenced;

menced ; so that *general universal Luxury*, could no more have got this extensive *Footing* than the *Fashions* from whence it arose could have found *Entrance* in any Country, without the immediate Assistance of the Government ; since the contrary Supposition, would destroy the Principles from whence these Inferences arise ; but they are undeniable, and therefore can't be avoided if not unjustly inter'd.

AS *general Luxury* therefore must be derived from *Fashion*, and That *fashion* from the Government, it follows undeniably, that *general Luxury* cannot *begin* with the *People*, but with the *Government* : and as *general Corruption* is admitted necessarily to flow from *general Luxury*, which is proved to be derived from *Fashion*, which is proved to *begin* with or be advanced by the *Government*, consequently the *Foundation* of *Corruption* must be laid by the *Government* : The *Conclusion* in the Strictness of Words, yet goes no further ; but if the *Principles* from whence it is drawn are just, and they were never yet disputed, I have already said enough to confute that which gave Occasion to it ; since if a *Government* was no further concerned in the *Corruption* of a *People*, than to furnish them with the *Means* of being thoroughly *debauched*, it would be a just *Conclusion* to say, *That Corruption does not begin with the People*.

But no *Government*, that has the Ruin of a Country at Heart will stop here ; because, it is not going quite far enough to compass their Aim. A *Free People* cannot become *Volunteers* in *Slavery* ; they may *follow*, but will never *lead* the Way to *general Depravity* and *Corruption* : The next Step there-

therefore will be to shew, that *Corruption* must actually be brought upon them by the *Government*.

AS the Increase of Corruption, must be proportion'd to the *Occasions* of employing it ; and these *Occasions*, to the *Power* of those in whose Service it is to be employed, it directly follows, that Corruption cannot become the Genius, or rather the Disgrace of a *Free People*, without a *common Fund* and a *common Object* ; and consequently, that they cannot be corrupted by any MEANS that are short of *universal Influence* : With these Advantages, which the Government alone enjoys, Corruption hath both *Depth* and *Compass*, and the Majority of a People may by Degrees be bribed out of their *Virtue* : But in *private Life* it can only be directed to *private Views*, that always lie within very narrow Limits ; *Petty Corruption* therefore must be peculiar to a *few*, who are not under the *Influence* of those Principles, which must generally prevail in a Country of Liberty. And as the Means of dissuasive Corruption, are in the Hands of the Government only, They will naturally be employ'd to advance that Work which *Fashion* begun ; and therefore the *Foundation* must not only be *laid*, but the *System* of *Corruption* must also be *erected* by the *Government*, whose *Care* it will naturally be to support it ; since if this be neglected, there will be some Danger of its *falling*, and crushing the *Builders* to *Pieces* : for the *Weight* of it will with Difficulty be born, unless the People are extremely well paid for sustaining it. Unless therefore we can suppose that the Leaders of a *State* raised up *Corruption* in Order to *fall* by it themselves, and not reduce the People, they will certainly use all consistent Means, to *widen* the *Bottom* on which it stands.

THE Manner in which Sentiments of this Kind, and the Consequences drawn from them are generally opposed, will engage our Attention for a Moment; for they consist of Arts, which though greatly subservient to the most *exalted Vice*, yet have so near an Affinity with the opposite *Virtue*, that many have actually mistaken the several *Phrases of Speech*, by the Assistance of which *Corruption* is most effectually *defended*, for a *Detestation* of it; here lies the *Fraud*.

IF Corruptions in the State are loudly complained of, the Corruptions of the *People* are urged against the *Complainants*; and altho' it be frankly acknowledged, that the Evil which is sought to be redressed deserves redressing; yet — *Corruption begins with Them*; *They* are the *Source* of it, and till their *Luxury* is reduced their *Necessities* or their *Crimes* will always expose them to the *Influence* of it; the *People* therefore and not their *Representatives*, are the *Enemies* the *Constitution* hath to fear: And thus *Crimes* that are actually *imposed* upon a whole *People*, serve equally to aggravate their *Guilt*, and palliate the *Conduct* of their *Be-trayers*.

THE Defects of such *contemptible Arts*, being *supplied* by the *Number* of *those*, who are *supported* by them, an *imaginary Virtue* is easily assumed; and many are taught to believe, that the *Vices* of the *People* are the *immediate Cause* of their *Corruption*, and not the *Bribes* that feed it.

THE Difference between the Opinion of *those* who make these *Complaints*, and of those whose Business it is to *stifle* them, indeed is very *wide*,
but

but for very *obvious* Reasons ; the *one* mean to *destroy Corruption*, by cutting off the Communication between the FOUNTAIN of the *Legislature*, and one of its Branches ; and the *other* to *support* it, by insisting that the *Spring* lies *lower*, and therefore miraculously runs *upwards*.

THEY illustrate this Reasoning with a particular Instance. *If the Peoples Votes can't be had without being bought, must not the Seat that is purchased with them, be put up to Sale ? And is not the Peoples Corruption the Cause, and not the Effect of this Sale.* Sufficient has been said already to expose the *Folly* of this little Artifice ; the *Wickedness* of it may easily undergo the same Fate.

IF the *Genealogy of Corruption*, has been clearly made out already, the Enquiry in Fact will only be, whether the *Offspring* of it can have a different *Descent* ; but the apparent Absurdity of this will not prevent my pursuing it ; because I know it has been thought a very important Objection to the *Honesty* of the *People*, and to the *Impartiality* of those who espouse their *Interest*, I will therefore treat it seriously.

THE *Observations* already made will warrant these, that the *Morals* of a whole People cannot be thoroughly perverted, till every Prejudice against *Vice* is removed, and the Distinctions mentioned in the former Part of this Treatise are imposed ; that till the *Heart* is thus cleared, the *Space* in which *Corruption* is to move, will not be extensive enough to answer the important *Ends* of its *Institution*.

IF therefore this Instance is brought to prove, as it certainly is, that without the Assistance of the *e Means, universal Prostitution*, may prevail, the *Wickedness* is countenanced by nothing but the *Folly* of it.

THE Fact without Doubt proves the *Morals* of the Receivers to be corrupt, but the disadvantageous Conclusion deduced from thence, is too shallow to deceive the Meanest of them ; since it is absolutely *silent* about the *Cause* of this *Infamy* ; which must have existed before the Bribe could with *Safety* be *offered*, or with *Readiness* received ; and consequently, *general Corruption* must first have been *recommended*, if not *established* by *Authority* ; or else, which is the only Alternative ; it must have been originally lodged by the *Author of Nature*, in the *Heart* of Man, for this *great* and *good Purpose* : To reason therefore against this Supposition, would confirm the Indignity it offers to human Nature. But from what has been already observed, there is no Necessity to encounter an Assertion, that reflects so much *Dishonour* both upon *God* and *Man* ; since the *Mediums* through which this *Evil* is *conveyed* and *spread* amongst the People, have been distinctly shewn, and the *Evil* itself traced to the *Source* ; which appears to lie a little *higher*, than is suggested in the First Assertion, concerning the *Luxury* and *Corruption* of the People.

BUT does the *Practice* of that which clears up the Point I am contending for, prove at once the *Innocence* of *Him* who *beguiles*, and the *Guilt* of the Person beguiled ? Is not this *Bribe* one of the *Causes*, tending to *diffuse* that *Venality*, the *Spring* of
of

of which is the Subject of the present Question ? And will not therefore this lead us naturally to consider under the Second Question the *Effect* that it produces ?

2dly. WHETHER such a *Parliament* will not only ruin the *Constitution* by their *Corruption*, but destroy the *Peoples Virtue* to enjoy the Fruits of that *Corruption* with *impunity* ?

AS a *dependent corrupt Parliament*, must needs be composed of the most profligate Set of Men, that ever claimed the *Impunity* of betraying a *Free People*, They will unavoidably be influenced by *Corruption* in the following *Proportions* ; which will strictly hold with Regard to Their *Conduct* in *Parliament*.

ACCORDING to the *Advantage* arising from each Man's *Dependency*, will be his *Obligation* to regard the *Publick Good* ; the Consideration of which, will be *proportionably* lessen'd, as the *Gain* that arises from the *Disregard* of it is *increased* ; and consequently, this *Disregard* will *increase*, in the same *Proportion* with the *Interest* arising from his *Dependency* ; a *Majority* therefore in *both Houses* of *Parliament*, under this *almighty Influence*, must not only *endanger* the *Constitution* by Their *Corruption*, but effectually *depress*, if not wholly destroy the *Peoples Virtue*, to enjoy the Fruits of that *Corruption* with *Impunity*. The former Part of this Conclusion, with Regard to the *Danger* of the *Constitution*, necessarily follows ; but to strengthen it yet, by enforcing the *latter*, which concerns our *last Stake*, it will not be improper to deduce it through another *Medium*

I have offered general Observations, to *prove* and therefore am now at Liberty to *assert*, that a *corrupt Dependency*, would be as little endured by a *virtuous* Parliament as a *virtuous* People; since the *one* could have no *Motive* to be under the *Influence*, nor the other to *submit* to the *Consequence* of it; it is certain therefore, that the *Virtue* of the *People* which is the *Foundation* of Their *Liberty*, must be removed, before the *corrupt Dependency* of their Representatives, can be *successfully* directed to those *Ends*, for which it is *wickedly* created.

THE *dead Part* of the *Weight*, with which the *Virtue* of a *People* is *depressed*, is *Simple Corruption*: But as the *Application* can only be *occasional*, to the *Influence* of it, cannot be *uniform*; especially upon *Men* who have any *Prejudices* remaining, in Favour of *Virtue* and *Liberty*.

AS the End therefore to be pursued by *Him*, who should *preside* in such a *Parliament* cannot be compassed by an *Imposition* which will only *stagger*, not *destroy* the *Morals* of a whole *People*; the *Inducement* which *Corruption* wants, the *Customs* and *Fashions* of the *Times* must *give*: In *Aid* of which, the following *Arts* must be practised.

EXCESS of *Indifference* concerning the *Conduct* or *Consequence* of *Publick Affairs*, must be propagated throughout the *Kingdom*, as a *Proof* of *Mens* steady *Application* to their *own*; and consequently, a total *Ignorance* of what passes in the *State*, for *Demonstration* of perfect *Knowledge* in that which immediately concern *Themselves*. Those, whose *imputed* *Righteousness*, and *sacred* *Characters* qualify them for this *exemplary* *Office*, must be
set

set apart to *invent Distinctions* which *no Man* understands, and afterwards *adjust* them to the Perversion of such as are *intelligible to all Men*. By the Help of these *Distinctions*, the *Guilt of Corruption* must be removed, the *Usefulness* and *Innocence of Dependency* demonstrated; and an *implicit Belief* in the *State*, shewn to be an *infallible Proof* of the *Peoples Orthodoxy* in the *Church*.

AN utter *Contempt* of *Publick Spirit*, *Love of Country*, and a *Disregard* of *Those* who profess them, must be set up at once as *Marks* of the *highest Loyalty*, and the *first Breeding*, and *sanctified* by the most *distinguished* and *eminent Examples*: *Conformity* with these, must be recommended and established; and the *Calmness* with which a *Man* is able to converse, upon the *impending Ruin* of his *Country*, or the *Conduct* of *Him* who may have the *Honour* to project it, as a *Proof* of such *Conformity*: To enforce this, it must be *taught*, that *Virtue* is only a *Theme* for *Conversation*, and *Interest* the *Principle of Action*; That all *Disputes* concerning *Publick Affairs*, are a *Contention* for *Power*, and not about the *Abuse* of it, and therefore, that an *Opposition* to the *worst of Ministers*, is only an *Attempt* to *supplant Him* and *excel his worst Crimes*.

IF there are any who doubt the *Expediency* of this Method, to supply the *little Defects* of *Corruption*, and *consummate* the *Debauchery* of the *People*, they will suffer me to ask them the following *Questions*.

IF *They* who are in *high Life*, *contemn* the *Principles* and *renounce* the *Practice*, which these *fraudulent Arts* are introduced to *explode*; if *Men* of
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this *superior* Condition, are infamous to *Excess*, yet *creedily* treated by *all* Men, and *ardently* loved by *many*, will their *conduct* be no *Precedents* to Men of *inferior* Condition, who properly speaking only *sub* it to *better* Judges? Shall the Peoples *Obedience* to *higher* Powers in all other Instances, be a Mark of their *Duty*, and yet in this of their *Shame*? Shall that *Crime*, which tends to *unbrace* the best *Constitution* of *Government* in the *World*, be talk'd of with *Pleasantry* or *Indifference* in the Course of an *easy* *Conversation*, and yet not be a suitable *Example* for *Crimes* of less Consequence? Shall the *little* *Necessitous* *Villain*, dream of wearing the *Badge* of *Infamy*, whilst the *Great* the *Important* *Villain* wears that of *Honour*? Shall this *puishy* *Criminal* dread *Vengeance*, whilst the other *cleaves* it, and is *forgiven*, nay *applauded*, for the most *Crying* *Sin*, that ever *bent* the *Neck*, or *broke* the *Heart*, of the *Fiercest* and *Bravest* of *Man-kind*? Shall *Corruption* be the only *Expedient* of *Government*, and yet the *Infamy* lie wholly upon *Those*, who can be only *Sufferers* in the *Calamity* of it? and shall *Honesty* yet be expected in the People, when *Those* who *Govern*, and *Those* who *Teach* Them, have thus banished the *Distinction* between *Virtue* and *Vice*?

I hope my *Warmth* has not led me so far from my Subject, as to make it improper for me to resume the *Thread* of it here; and *draw* it to the following *Conclusions*; which naturally arise from the *former*.

1st. THAT although the whole *Fund* of *Honesty*, which for so many Ages hath been the *Support* of our *Liberties*, is inexhaustible; and in the Hours of Silence and Retirement, will certainly
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raise *Reflections* sufficiently to torture the most profligate, yet These are too faint, when the *Spirit* of *Virtue* is gone, to stand before a *Deluge* of Corruption : The *Dregs* of *Virtue*, are rather of Use to ferment and inflame the *Spirit* of *Vice*.

2dly. AS the *Morals* therefore of a whole People must be thus relaxed, before they can approach towards *Slavery* ; so if this Scheme which alone can reduce Them to it, should in any after Age be projected by one, who should be able to buy up the Peoples *Virtue* with Their own Money, the warmest Season must then be taken to cultivate and revive the Principles of it ; since that alone can enable Them to regain their former *Vigour* ; and bear the fair Fruit of *Liberty* : But for the Reasons already given, this Effect cannot be produced, till the Cause of their Decay, which is a corrupt dependent Parliament, be utterly eradicated ; or the baneful Influence of it wholly withheld. It follows therefore,

3dly. THAT a dependent Parliament must not only ruin the Constitution by their Corruption, but destroy the Peoples *Virtue* to enjoy the Fruits of that Corruption with Impunity : And Thus will the Possibility of restoring Their Liberties be taken away, at the same Time that Their Constitution is destroyed ; consequently,

4thly, TO prevent the corrupt Dependency of Parliament, is previous to all other Considerations that are of a political Kind, and is therefore the previous Question in Politics.

